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ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

An information access system stores items of information in an unstructured global database. When a user requests access to the system, the system delivers to that user an identification of only those items of information which are believed to be relevant to the user's interest. The determination as to the items of information that are relevant to a user is carried out by ranking each available item in accordance with any one or more techniques. In one approach, the content of each document is matched with an adaptive profile of a user's interest. In another approach, a feedback mechanism is provided to allow users to indicate their degree of interest in each item of information. These indications are used to determine whether other users, who have similar or dissimilar interests, will find a particular item to be relevant.